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Children
Senior Citizens
The Handicapped
The Mentally Retarded
Those in Financial Need



Ontario

Ministry of
Community and
Social Services

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Hon. Keith C. Norton Minister
Robert D. Carman Deputy Minister

Ministry of Community and Social
Services

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Introduction

The title of this booklet is appropriate. The Ministry of Community and Social Services exists to help those with special needs – children and adults who need assistance on either a short or a long-term basis.

Who do we help?

The services of this ministry can be grouped into two main categories: children and their families; and adults.

Services to children and/or their families include:

- group or foster homes,
- adoption or foster parents,
- help with physical, emotional or developmental handicaps,
- temporary or long-term help for children in need of protection, and
- probation and aftercare programs.

Services to adults include:

- senior citizens' centres and community programs;
- help for physical, emotional or developmental handicaps;
- benefits for those in financial need – either temporary or long term; and
- group homes – e.g. for ex-offenders, alcoholics, or the emotionally or developmentally handicapped.

Where to get help?

To provide services at a local level, the province has been divided into four regions: northern, southwestern, southeastern and central. Within each region there are area offices for the two service fields, children's and adults'.

Area offices administer either children's or adults' services and are able to assist in inquiries about funding, existing programs and services, and proposals for new programs. Area offices are listed on pages **13** and **14**.

Some programs, however, can't be conveniently divided into a child or adult category. Also, the responsibilities for some programs are shared with private agencies or other levels of government. In any event, the area offices can help you either directly or by referral.

Family and Children's Services

The family is the best environment for most children to learn and to grow into responsible and independent adults. Therefore a major thrust of ministry programs is to strengthen the family unit and help children develop in a healthy home atmosphere.

It is recognized, however, that some children need the protection or the specialized help available only from outside the home. Thus a variety of programs is provided.

Children's aid societies

Children's aid societies (CASs) – sometimes called family and children's services – have two key responsibilities. They assist children who are in need of protection and they support families in their child caring responsibilities. The activities of the local children's aid society are preventive in nature. The society (or CAS) tries to deal with a family problem before it develops into a crisis.

Children's aid societies are non-profit corporations. The ministry supervises and partially funds them. The services of the local CAS in your community include:

- programs to prevent family breakups, including parent education and family counselling;
- protection of children from abuse and from situations of distress;
- guidance for teenage mothers-to-be who are on their own;
- foster homes for children needing temporary or long-term placement; and
- adoption services – all aspects involved in helping a family adjust to the adoption.

Your local children's aid (or family and children's services association) is listed in the phone book, under 'C' for Children.

Adoption

Thinking of adopting? Would-be adoptive parents should contact their local children's aid society to discuss adoption. A CAS worker will then talk to you or perhaps invite you to an orientation meeting with other interested couples. If you wish to proceed, a worker will be assigned.

Adoption aids

The ministry, using various adoption aids, assists in bringing together adoptable children and prospective parents. *Today's Child*, a syndicated column written by Helen Allen is distributed to newspapers across Ontario. Many of the children featured in the column are older or wish to be adopted with their brothers or sisters as a family. The television show, *Family Finder*, features adoptable children who come from children's aid societies all over Ontario.

The National Adoption Desk (NAD) in Ottawa is a resource for embassies and foreign countries seeking Canadian homes. Many third world countries consider Canadian homes for their needy children.

Adoption disclosure registry

A registry was created in 1978 for those adoptees and natural parents of adoptees who may wish to contact each other or share information. If the natural parents, the adoptee and the adopting parents agree to the disclosure, information may be exchanged following counselling. Application forms are available through the local CAS or the Adoption Disclosure Registry, Children's Services Division.

Child abuse and neglect

What the law says

Anyone who has information that a child is in need of protection must report this information to a children's aid society immediately. Such information is confidential. A children's aid society is legally required to investigate and must take appropriate action to protect the child.

Prevention

Public education is an important part of child abuse prevention. The ministry has produced a number of pamphlets and booklets for public use, plus guidelines and research reports for professional use.

The ministry funds a variety of demonstration projects and programs aimed at preventing child abuse. In addition, a central child abuse register has been set up to record the names of all children who have suffered abuse and the persons who have inflicted or permitted the abuse. This information is then available to children's aid societies throughout the province as a means of 'tracking' the child, and thereby assisting the CAS in its attempt to prevent repetition of incidents of child abuse in the family.

Children in trouble with the law

The ministry supervises a number of programs and facilities for children in trouble with the law. For instance, a child placed on probation is supervised by a probation and aftercare officer. The child may continue to live at home, or be placed in a foster or group home funded by the ministry. The ministry operates a small number of training schools for juveniles who need a structured setting. There are also a number of centres for assessing juveniles.

Children requiring residential care

The ministry funds and supervises homes for children and youths unable to live with their families or on their own. Temporary accommodation is sometimes necessary during a family crisis such as illness, separation or loss of housing. Long-term needs are filled by a variety of group, foster homes and institutional care.

Want to be a foster parent?

There's a continuing need for foster parents to take care of boys and girls on both a short and a long-term basis. Youngsters need foster care for a variety of reasons – emotional or behavioral problems, or trouble with the law.

Contact your local children's aid society for additional information.

Children requiring emotional care

Children with behavioral or psychological problems may receive care and treatment at children's mental health centres located throughout the province. These centres provide services for emotionally disturbed children and youths with a view to returning them to their families or communities as contributing members of society.

The ministry is attempting to ensure that each child with emotional problems has reasonable access to a spectrum of mental health services. The ministry supervises these centres and provides operating funds.

Day nurseries

The ministry ensures that all day care centres and nurseries meet accepted standards of child care, fire safety, health, nutrition and child guidance. It licenses and supervises all group programs for normal children up to 10 years of age and for mentally handicapped children, ages two to 18 years.

There are different types of day care centres and nurseries within your community. People living in their own home can set up a private home day care agency caring for not more than five children. Some private homes are 'supervised' by the local municipality and some qualify for a fees subsidy from the municipality.

For more information on types of day care within your local community, call the nearest children's services office of the ministry. If you think you might qualify for a fees subsidy because of your financial circumstances, contact the social services department of your municipality.

Handicapped children at home

Families who care for severely handicapped children in their own homes may qualify for a special monthly allowance. The Handicapped Children's Benefits program is designed to help defray the extraordinary costs related to the special assistance and treatment needed for the severely handicapped child.

A severely handicapped child is one who is unable to perform such basic life skills as walking, self-feeding, toileting, personal hygiene and communication.

For more information about this allowance, contact the nearest adult area office of the ministry (listed on page 13). There is a pamphlet called *Handicapped Children's Benefits* which explains the allowance, and contains an application form.

Developmentally handicapped children

Services to developmentally handicapped children are administered by the ministry, community agencies and facilities for the mentally retarded. Some facilities are owned and operated by the ministry; others are funded by the ministry and operated by local boards. Services in your community for retarded children may include:

- assessment and diagnostic facilities,
- family counselling,
- day nurseries,
- parent relief,
- nursing and medical care,
- behavior modification programs,
- education,
- recreational and social activities,
- life skills training,
- community outreach programs, and
- special programs for retarded children with additional handicaps such as hearing or sight loss.

Services For Adults

The developmentally handicapped

There are many support services available to assist developmentally handicapped adults to live independently in the community. For others whose handicap necessitates a more structured environment, there are a number of specialized facilities operated by the ministry or a community agency. Services to the developmentally handicapped in your community may include:

- accommodation in special residences and group homes,
- employment and training,
- adult protective services,
- communications (specialized communication skills),
- life skills training,
- behavior management,
- adult education programs,
- recreational and social activities, and
- financial assistance to meet special needs.

For more information about services for mentally retarded adults, consult the ministry adult area office nearest you (list on page 13) or the nearest mental retardation facility (list on page 15).

Seniors

Aids for independence

Most senior citizens in Ontario live in their own homes or with relatives. The ministry helps local municipalities and non-profit organizations operate services for seniors such as meals-on-wheels, homemakers' and nurses' services and senior volunteers-in-service who help seniors remain at home. The ministry booklet *Resources for Seniors* gives additional information.

The ministry also assists seniors in applying for the various Ontario benefits which they are entitled to such as the Ontario Senior Citizens' Privilege Card and the Drug Benefit program.

Elderly persons' centres

Elderly persons' centres offer daily social, recreational, and service delivery activities to encourage seniors to remain active in the community. The ministry gives grants to the municipalities and other non-profit organizations which operate these centres. If a Senior Citizens' Club is part of the centre, its services and activities are eligible for ministry funding.

Homes for the aged

Subsidies are paid to charitable and municipal homes which offer residential or extended health care for seniors unable to remain in their own homes. Charges for accommodation, meals and services are levied, and a subsidy is provided if needed.

Facilities in homes for the aged usually include games and crafts rooms, gift and tuck shops, hair salons and chapels. Many newer homes offer private accommodation for married couples.

For specific information about services for senior citizens, contact the adult area office nearest you (list on page 13). For details about activities in your neighborhood, check your local library or community information centre.

Rehabilitation for physically and socially handicapped

Accommodation Programs

The ministry funds residences for physically handicapped persons unable to live in normal family situations.

Halfway houses for persons needing interim help to adjust to normal living are also funded by the ministry and include half-way houses for alcoholics, ex-offenders and the socially disadvantaged.

Employment Programs

Aid for emotionally handicapped persons is provided with the goal of preparing for and obtaining employment. Employment may be sheltered, in the open labour market or at home.

Ministry involvement includes the provision of the following services under the *Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act* to individuals with a physical, emotional or intellectual impairment or disability which has caused a vocational handicap:

- counselling services to support an individual through the rehabilitation process until placed in suitable employment;
- assessment services to determine vocational aptitudes and the kind of work that the handicapped person is best suited for;
- restoration services and goals such as artificial limbs, braces or wheelchairs;
- vocational training which may involve training at a community college, university, private or business school, workshop, or an on-the-job training program; and
- job placement and supportive work placement services are provided by ministry staff and by voluntary agencies.

The ministry also shares with municipal governments the cost of work-activity projects giving participants an opportunity for social and educational development within a working environment. Work-activity projects are aimed at removing personal, family and environmental barriers to employment.

For specific information about these services for the handicapped, contact the ministry area office nearest you (listed on page 13).

Those in Financial Need – Temporary or Long-term

The ministry works closely with municipalities in providing financial assistance.

General welfare assistance

General Welfare Assistance is available at municipal social service offices to persons in temporary financial need who are:

- unemployed and looking for work,
- supporting children alone,
- caring for foster children (under limited circumstances),
- sick,
- disabled or blind,
- elderly, or
- attending public or high school with no other means of support.

The amount of assistance depends on the recipient's income, expenses, family size and ages of the children. General Welfare Assistance provides money for basic living costs, special diet food if needed, and fuel. In addition, recipients and their dependents receive premium-free health insurance and drug benefits.

Supplementary Aid or Special Assistance may be provided through municipal offices for such needs as:

- moving or necessary transportation (other than ambulance),
- comfort allowance for those in nursing homes,
- surgical supplies and prosthetic appliances,
- dental or optical services, including eyeglasses,
- vocational training, and
- funerals and burials.

Family benefits allowance (FBA)

This program, similar to municipal general welfare assistance, is provided to persons and their families who need help on a long-term basis. To qualify, the person must be in need and be:

- a sole-support mother,
- a person who is disabled, blind or permanently unemployable,
- a foster parent (on behalf of the foster child in limited circumstances), or
- an elderly person.

Family benefits are paid monthly by cheque. The amount depends on incomes, expenses, family size and the age of the children. The program also includes free health insurance, prescription drugs, eyeglasses and hearing aids. Families with dependent children are entitled to free dental care for the children and emergency care for the parents, as well as back-to-school benefits.

Work incentive program

The work incentive program is designed to encourage and to assist those recipients on the Family Benefits Assistance Program to return to full or part-time employment. It is a voluntary program that provides allowances and health-related benefits, for up to two years, to FBA recipients who become self-sufficient through full-time employment. The work incentive program also provides assistance to those with part-time jobs to retain more of their earnings. For more information about the work incentive program, including eligibility criteria, contact the nearest local office of the ministry.

Training allowance

Special provisions may be made for those with dependent children who are taking approved Canada Manpower job-training courses. They may be able to continue to receive a minimal allowance plus coverage for medical, dental and drug expenses. When entering full-time employment, such recipients may also be eligible for the phase-out allowance (see work incentive program).

Temporary financial problems

The ministry also sponsors programs through the municipalities and/or private agencies to help persons get through periods of temporary financial distress. They include:

- legal aid for those unable to pay fees for necessary legal services, (provided by the Law Society of Upper Canada),
- credit/debt counselling, provided through private agencies, and
- subsidies for homemakers to enable the elderly, handicapped, ill or the convalescent to remain in their own homes and prevent serious family disruption, provided through municipalities, except in unorganized territories. Homemaker services are available on a daily or periodic basis, under the direction of a physician or visiting nurse. For more information ask for the brochure *Visitors Who Help*.

How to find out more

There are a number of free publications such as pamphlets and fact sheets which describe ministry services and programs. Audio-visual resources are also available. For more information, contact your area office (listed on pages 13 and 14) or contact:

Communications Branch
Ministry of Community and Social Services
7th floor, Hepburn Block
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1E9
Telephone: (416) 965-7825

Ministry Area Offices Adult Services

Northern Region

Sudbury

111 Larch St.
St. Andrew's Place
Suite 1, 8th Fl.
Sudbury, Ont.
P3E 4T5
(705) 675-4541

Thunder Bay

710 Victoria Ave.
Suite 301
Thunder Bay, Ont.
P7C 5P7
(807) 475-1245

Timmins

11 Elm Street N
Ground Floor
Timmins, Ont.
P4N 6A3
(705) 267-7901

Southwestern Region

Hamilton

100 Main St. East
Century 21 Bldg.
39th Floor, P.O. Box 870
Hamilton, Ont.
L8N 3X8
(416) 526-9300

London

495 Richmond St., 6th Fl.
London, Ont.
N6A 5A9
(519) 438-5111

Waterloo

75 King St. S., 5th Fl.
Waterloo, Ont.
N2J 1P2
(519) 886-4700

Windsor

250 Windsor Ave. 1st. Fl.
Windsor, Ont.
N9A 6V9
(519) 254-1651

Central Region

Barrie

70 Collier St.
5th Floor
Barrie, Ont.
L4M 4Z2
(705) 737-1311

Toronto

110 Eglinton Ave. W.
5th Floor
Toronto, Ont.
M4R 2C9
(416) 965-8449

Southeastern Region

Kingston

1055 Princess St.
P.O. Box 970
Kingston, Ont.
K7L 4X8
(613) 544-6206

Ottawa

2197 Riverside Dr.
Ottawa, Ont.
K1H 7X3
(613) 737-5920

Peterborough

277 George St. N.
Peterborough, Ont.
K9J 3G9
(705) 748-5883

Ministry Area Offices Children's Services**Northern Region**

Sudbury
 St. Andrew's Place
 8th Floor
 111 Larch St.
 Sudbury, Ont.
 P3E 4T5
 (705) 675-4544

Thunder Bay
 710 Victoria Ave.
 Suite 301
 Thunder Bay, Ont.
 P7C 5P7
 (807) 475-1345

Timmins
 11 Elm Street N.
 Ground Floor
 Timmins, Ontario
 P4N 6A3
 (705) 267-7901

Southwestern Region

Hamilton
 499 King St. East
 St. John's Place, 2nd Fl.
 Hamilton, Ont.
 L8N 1E1
 (416) 525-6431

London
 IBM Bldg., 5th Fl.
 195 Dufferin Ave.
 London, Ont.
 N6A 1K7
 (519) 438-8387

Central Region

Barrie
 70 Collier St.
 5th Floor
 Barrie, Ont.
 L4M 4Z2
 (705) 737-1311

Toronto
 110 Eglinton Ave. W.
 5th Floor
 Toronto, Ont.
 M4R 2C9
 (416) 965-7863

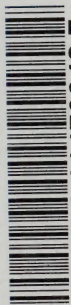
Southeastern Region

Kingston
 1055 Princess St.
 Kingston, Ont.
 K7L 5T3
 (613) 549-6470

Peterborough
 263 1/2 George St. N.
 Peterborough, Ont.
 K9J 3G6
 (705) 743-1624

Ministry Schedule I Facilities

Pine Ridge P.O. Box 130 Aurora, Ontario L4G 3H3	(416) 364-6269
Adult Occupational Centre P.O. Box 12,000 Barrie, Ontario L4M 4W3	(705) 728-6910
St. Lawrence Regional Centre P.O. Box 386 Brockville, Ontario K6V 5V6	(613) 345-1461
Southwestern Regional Centre P.O. Box 1000 Cedar Springs Blenheim, Ontario N0P 1A0	(519) 676-5431
D'Arcy Place 700 D'Arcy Street Cobourg, Ontario K9A 4L5	(416) 372-3341
Bluewater Centre P.O. Box 71 Goderich, Ontario N7A 3Y8	(519) 524-7331
Muskoka Centre P.O. Box 280 Gravenhurst, Ontario P0C 1G0	(705) 687-2201
CPRI P.O. Box 2460 London, Ontario N6A 4G6	(519) 471-2540
Huron Regional Centre P.O. Box 1000 Orillia, Ontario L3V 6L2	(705) 326-7361
Midwestern Regional Centre P.O. Box 400 Palmerston, Ontario N0G 2P0	(519) 343-2015
Prince Edward Heights P.O. Box 440 Picton, Ontario K0K 2T0	(613) 476-2105
St. Thomas Adult Rehabilitation and Training Centre (START) P.O. Box 2025 St. Thomas, Ontario N5P 3X1	(519) 633-4081
Rideau Regional Centre P.O. Box 2000 Smith Falls, Ontario K7A 4T7	(613) 283-2990
Northwestern Regional Centre 580 Algoma Street North P.O. Box 3270 Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 5G4	(807) 345-0576
Surrey Place Centre 2 Surrey Place Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C2	(416) 925-5141
Durham Centre for the Developmentally Handicapped P.O. Box 613 Whitby, Ontario L1N 5S9	(416) 668-7745
Oxford Regional Centre P.O. Box 310 Woodstock, Ontario N4S 7X9	(519) 539-1251



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